

# FIRST FRIDAY PRAYER & FASTING: A STRATEGIC DEPLOYMENT

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*"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them."*

—Matthew 18:20

*"Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight."*

—Leviticus 26:8

*"Suppose ten [righteous] should be found there [in the city of Sodom]? And the Lord said, 'I will not destroy it for the sake of ten.'"*

—Genesis 18:32

**T**he 90's are proving to be a remarkable—historic?—decade of cooperation in the body of Christ. A remarkable degree of unity and "partnering" is coming into the ranks of Christian leaders and believers across the United States and around the world.

International evangelistic and church planting efforts such as AD 2000 and Beyond have rapidly gained momentum. There is now a near-explosive ingathering of redeemed souls. It is not uncommon, for example, to hear of new churches in the former Soviet Union doubling or tripling every few months. More than 40,000 men, women and children continue to come to Christ each day in China and on the continent of Africa. We are receiving reports of more and more believers in Islamic nations. Teams of intercessors and evangelists are now penetrating or making plans to "invade" the last unreached nations with the gospel by the year 2000.

Revival continues in portions of Central and South America and has been breaking forth in Cuba. Various Hispanic nations have begun to send missionaries to Arab lands and evangelists into the Spanish speaking neighborhoods of North America. Intercessors for Mexico saw some 25,000 join their ranks in just a few years and the leadership recently reported that at least one million believers in Mexico participated in a 21-day prayer and fasting vigil conducted prior to their August elections. Hundreds—thousands?—of new Bible believing churches have sprung up in Mexico.

In North America, various expressions of renewal, times of refreshing and revival are being noted along with confirmed reports of deep repentance, changed lives and some wonderful sovereign conversions. I believe we will stand amazed at the huge harvest the Lord will soon reap

from Canada and the United States! A continuing move of God among the high-school age youth is but a small beginning.

Is there a common factor in all of the above developments? Yes, concerted, prevailing prayer and fasting! As Jonathan Edwards' articulated during America's First Great Awakening, a "great Blessing" is released when believers humble themselves before God and unite in days of prayer and fasting. (See quote at bottom of this page.)

Past surveys of our IFA "partners-in-prayer" show that there are thousands in our ranks who have faithfully kept the First Friday of each month as a day of united prayer and fasting since the founding of this ministry in 1973. They have been "strategically deployed" in God's army—some for more than 20 years! "Strategic" is defined as "necessary in the initiation or completion of a plan; required in the conduct of war; designed and trained to strike an enemy at the sources of his military, economic or political power; that which is of great importance within an integrated whole."

These "pioneer" intercessors have been joined by tens of thousands of other faithful brothers and sisters, month after month, year after year. They have humbled themselves and afflicted their souls with fasting—some skipping meals, some eating only plain foods, others on juice fasts, some on water, some engaged in total fasting for the 24 hours—yet all united and praying in agreement to fulfill the apostolic prayer mandate of 1 Timothy 2:1-8—to see "all men" saved, for "kings and all in authority," for the well being of their cities and regions (Jeremiah 29:7), for pastors and church leaders and for the body of Christ to come to maturity and a release of corporate ministry.

They have engaged in spiritual warfare and restrained works of evil, thwarted wicked schemes and exposed corruption. They have helped maintain good government and sustain godly men and women called to public service. They have watched some rise and others fall from high positions. They have helped cultivate the renewed missions mentality and the concerns for mercy, compassion and justice in the body of Christ. They have fueled

the new church growth and evangelistic efforts which many more read about in their magazines. They have touched the Father's heart and it has pleased Him to extend much grace and mercy to our needy nation, our cities, our churches and our own lives. Much judgement, violence and calamity has been averted.

In some places, the observance of the First Friday is maintained by a single intercessor, by just a husband and wife or by two prayer partners. In other areas, a triplet or handful of believers, or a small group in a city keep watch. Many meet for prayer over the noon hour. Some Christian radio and TV stations broadcast the First Friday prayer focus outlined in the IFA monthly newsletter. A good number of local churches conduct early morning or evening First Friday prayer meetings. While many First Friday assemblies number fewer than 100, there are some large "concerts" and some periodic First Friday city-wide and regional gatherings.

**T**he directors and staff of major U.S. Christian ministries, many of the hundreds of denominational and non-denominational prayer coordinators and thousands of praying women joined with Lydia, the Esther network and Aglow also keep the First Friday. This year thousands of Promise Keeper men and hundreds of young men and women have joined our ranks. In various nations the First Friday is also regularly observed by more than 1200 missionaries, members of the military, other Americans serving overseas and by many members of Youth With A Mission (YWAM). Together, these comprise a great multitude united and praying in agreement all across America and around the world!

In recent years, we have received inquiries by Church leaders in the Middle East, the CIS, Africa, and the Caribbean as to how they might establish a nation-wide First Friday observance among their constituencies. Many leaders are sensing the need for a systematic, focussed, monthly strategic deployment of their prayer and fasting potential. Please pray that we might have wisdom, adequate time and resources to help encourage and equip this growing First Friday army.

In closing, I would encourage you to meditate upon the wonderful promises and the incredible exponential prayer potential outlined in the opening scriptures and in Deuteronomy 28:7; Joshua 23:10; Judges 7:16-23; 1 Samuel 14:6-16; Matthew 16:18, 18:19-20; 1 John 5:14-16. I trust you will be inspired and encouraged to press on in the place of prayer. We stand ready to assist you in your keeping of the First Friday. Bulk copies of the newsletter are available upon request. We always welcome your letters, comments and reports of answered prayer.

## Walking Out the Vision of America's Christian Founders...



Jonathan Edwards  
(1703-1758)

*"I have often said it would be a thing very desirable and very likely to be followed with a great Blessing, if there could be some contrivance, that there should be an agreement of all God's people in America that are well affected to this work, to keep a day of Fasting and Prayer to God; wherein we should unite of the same day... It seems to me, it would mightily encourage and animate God's saints, in humbly and earnestly seeking God, for such blessings which concerns them all."*

—Jonathan Edwards, 1742